

part D prescription drug loophole that currently causes many seniors to pay thousands of dollars out of pocket, and it will help keep Medicare solvent and able to continue paying benefits well into the future. Without reform, Medicare part A will be insolvent by 2017. If we do nothing, Medicare hospital reimbursements will be cut by 2017. Without reform, premiums for Medicare part D doctor reimbursements are projected to increase an average of 8.5 percent every year through 2013. That's why the National Committee to Preserve Social Security and Medicare supports this bill. The Alliance for Retired Americans and the Center for Medicare Advocacy both support this bill. The National Council on Aging and the Medicare Rights Center both support this bill, as does the AARP.

The scare tactic said this bill would harm the ability of caregivers to provide lifesaving care. In actuality, doctors and medical providers know that this bill will preserve their ability to properly treat their patients and be fairly compensated. That's why the American Academy of Family Physicians and the Federation of American Hospitals support this bill. The American Academy of Physicians Assistants and the American College of Surgeons support this bill. The American Nurses Association and the American College of Physicians support this bill. And the American Medical Association supports this bill.

The scare tactic says this bill will deny care to those with life-threatening conditions, like cancer. In actuality, the Affordable Health Care for America Act will safeguard those with previous existing medical conditions and those in need of lifesaving procedures. That's why the American Heart Association and the American Stroke Association support this bill. The American Cancer Society's Cancer Action Network and the American Diabetes Association both support this bill. The Consortium for Citizens With Disabilities and the National Alliance on Mental Illness both support this bill. The National Breast Cancer Coalition and the Depression and Bipolar Support Alliance both support this bill, and the Paralyzed Veterans of America support this bill.

The scare tactic said this will wreck the economy. In actuality, this bill will help businesses—especially small businesses—control the spiraling cost of health care in America. Mr. Speaker, the Business Roundtable recently released a report that found that without reform, by 2019, employer-based health insurance payments will rise 166 percent. Without reform, those dramatic cost increases will endanger the economy, leaving employers and employees facing the untenable option of dropping coverage or laying off employees. The Business Roundtable's report found that the legislative reforms in the current health insurance bills could reduce employer costs by \$3,000 per employee by 2019. That's why the Main

Street Alliance supports the Affordable Health Care for America Act. The National Farmers Union supports the bill. The U.S. Women's Chamber of Commerce supports the bill, as does the Small Business Majority.

The scare tactics said that the American people would suffer. In actuality, consumer advocacy groups know that this bill will provide Americans with their choice of affordable health care options. That's why the Consumers Union supports it, the Consumer Health Coalition supports it, and the National Patient Advocate Foundation supports it.

Mr. Speaker, there are hundreds more State and national organizations that refused to fall prey to diversionary scare tactics and supported this ground-breaking legislation on health care. The focus on these individual groups is disparate, but they share a common agenda with the majority of Americans and the majority of this House: Delivery now on the long overdue need for responsible health insurance reform.

□ 1045

#### WE CAN DO BETTER

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Oregon (Mr. DEFAZIO) for 5 minutes.

Mr. DEFAZIO. Too many Americans are out of work. The stimulus certainly preserved some public sector jobs and was of benefit to public education and filled in some other gaps. But the rest of the spending has not been of great impact, particularly the \$340 billion in tax cuts insisted upon by three Republican Senators. And unfortunately, the Obama administration, at the urging of its chief economist, Larry Summers, caved in to those demands for yet more ineffective tax cuts, something that failed miserably during the Bush era to put the economy back on track, and failed again.

If you don't have a job, a tax cut doesn't do you much good and doesn't put you back to work, does it? So it's time for a new approach, considered, unfortunately by some, old school. That would be rebuilding the infrastructure of America.

According to the American Society of Civil Engineers, we have a \$2.2 trillion infrastructure deficit in this country. One hundred sixty thousand bridges on the Federal highway system are either load-limited or functionally obsolete. Our transit agencies across America have an \$80 billion backlog.

Now, the chief economist for the President, Mr. Larry Summers, an academic, doesn't think that infrastructure investment's a good thing. He cut it back in the stimulus last spring. But you know, actually, the 4 percent of that huge bill that went to infrastructure created 25 percent of the jobs. So perhaps Mr. Summers was wrong yet again, like he was when he prevented the Clinton administration from regulat-

ing derivatives, which caused our world collapse of the economy.

But he thinks that infrastructure takes too long to spend out. What he doesn't understand is, when you have a massive backlog, you have projects that can be put on the ground or to work immediately.

I'll use an example that's kind of close to home for the President. The Chicago Transit Authority, they have a \$6.8 billion backlog in their transit system. They testified before my committee that they could spend \$500 million tomorrow, tomorrow, productively, bringing that system back toward a state of good repair. It would still take another \$6.5 billion, \$6.3 billion, and it would take quite some time.

Now, they got out of the stimulus \$240.2 million for their transit backlog. They spent that money productively in 30 days. They bought buses. Guess what? You buy a bus, people who make buses have jobs. People who make parts for the buses have jobs. We have a "Buy America" rule. Those jobs are actually here in the United States of America, and then those people work and they pay taxes and there's revenues to the government; sort of a good old-fashioned way of stimulating the economy and helping the deficit. Unfortunately, the President's chief economist doesn't believe in this. It's time for him to reorient his thinking.

We need a massive investment in our infrastructure. It is so degraded that we have projects ready to go all across the country in transit districts, in States with bridge replacement. These aren't things that require five to 10 years of planning and a long spend-out and those things that those ethereal academic economists think about when they think about transportation infrastructure.

No, when you're in deficit, like the United States of America is today, when you're headed toward a Third World transportation infrastructure, while our competitors like China are spending hundreds of billions of dollars for high speed rail, what are we doing? We're struggling to keep Amtrak running at 19th century speeds. That's kind of pathetic.

We can do better. But it will take a commitment, a push by the White House, a reorientation in the thinking down there, or perhaps ignoring some bad advice they're getting, and have the President champion the creation of jobs and the rebuilding of our infrastructure. And you know, we can do this in a way that actually wouldn't have to add to the deficit.

They've done a great job of bailing out Wall Street. Goldman Sachs is going to be paying bonuses that average \$700,000 this year. Whoa, good times are here again, except not for an America that is suffering very high unemployment. So maybe it's time that Wall Street just gave back a little bit. We could reinstitute a tax we had from 1916 to 1966, a modest transaction tax.

Congress, in the last Great Depression, they had the guts to actually double that tax. Disaster was predicted on Wall Street. Guess what? The economy only went up from there, and tens of thousands, hundreds of thousands of people were put to work building a new America, an infrastructure that needs rebuilding today.

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#### RECESS

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to clause 12(a) of rule I, the Chair declares the House in recess until noon today.

Accordingly (at 10 o'clock and 51 minutes a.m.), the House stood in recess until noon.

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□ 1200

#### AFTER RECESS

The recess having expired, the House was called to order by the Speaker pro tempore (Mr. BLUMENAUER) at noon.

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#### PRAYER

The Chaplain, the Reverend Daniel P. Coughlin, offered the following prayer:

Lord, some days we do not know how to pray. What are the greatest needs of the Nation? Who needs Your attention? To whom should we individually offer our slippery dollar?

You alone know our personal needs. You see the depths I dare not confess to another. My most severe wounds are buried in my own fear. The whole truth is difficult for us to face, humanly, so we will live another day on the margins.

Lord, help Congress to do what it is able to do. Anything more would be fictitious. You alone know us through and through. So, by placing all our trust in You, we can now work as hard as we can and rest in peace.

Amen.

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#### THE JOURNAL

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair has examined the Journal of the last day's proceedings and announces to the House his approval thereof.

Pursuant to clause 1, rule I, the Journal stands approved.

Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN. Mr. Speaker, pursuant to clause 1, rule I, I demand a vote on agreeing to the Speaker's approval of the Journal.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the Speaker's approval of the Journal.

The question was taken; and the Speaker pro tempore announced that the ayes appeared to have it.

Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN. Mr. Speaker, I object to the vote on the ground that a quorum is not present and make the point of order that a quorum is not present.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to clause 8, rule XX, further proceedings on this question will be postponed.

The point of no quorum is considered withdrawn.

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#### PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Will the gentleman from North Carolina (Mr. COBLE) come forward and lead the House in the Pledge of Allegiance.

Mr. COBLE led the Pledge of Allegiance as follows:

I pledge allegiance to the Flag of the United States of America, and to the Republic for which it stands, one nation under God, indivisible, with liberty and justice for all.

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#### CONGRATULATING EMBRY RIDDLE UNIVERSITY

(Mrs. KIRKPATRICK of Arizona asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Mrs. KIRKPATRICK of Arizona. Mr. Speaker, on November 5, Embry Riddle University held their annual symposium dedicated to issues in homeland security on its Prescott, Arizona, campus. Unfortunately, the House held votes that day and I could not attend, but I heard that it was a fantastic event.

This year's theme was "Challenges for Homeland Security in the 21st Century," and panelists came from the FBI, the CIA, and TSA, the Arizona Department of Public Safety, and from the world of academia, among other places. Topics covered a wide range of issues, such as cybersecurity, public-private partnerships, and coordination between Federal, State, and local law enforcement.

I congratulate the faculty and administration of the Embry Riddle Prescott campus for putting together the event and working to develop a new generation of homeland security professionals.

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#### FIREFIIGHTERS

(Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend her remarks.)

Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN. I rise today to commend some of our country's finest heroes—our firefighters. These caring individuals at our local fire departments in the Florida Keys and Miami-Dade are first-rate examples of the selflessness and commitment required to be a firefighter. Every day, these brave folks work to better protect and care for our communities. Their outstanding work allows all of us to live with a greater peace of mind for the safety of our families.

The Miami-Dade Fire Rescue motto is: "Always Ready, Proud to Serve." Recently, they were named Florida's 2009 EMS Provider of the Year. My heartfelt congratulations go out to each of these remarkable heroes who made this distinction possible.

A bit further south in my district, in the Florida Keys, the Monroe County

firefighters just opened up their new facility in Big Pine Key. This newly renovated fire station will help them better serve the needs of our community.

I truly appreciate the hard work and dedication of all of our firefighters. Their professional and humanitarian services are essential to the public health, safety, and well-being of all south Florida. Congratulations to all.

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#### PUTTING PATIENTS' NEEDS FIRST

(Mr. WALZ asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. WALZ. I'm here today to applaud this House for fighting for working Americans by last weekend passing comprehensive welfare reform. I want to recognize this legislation takes a huge step forward in addressing the issue of paying for value in our health care system.

The current payment system rewards volume and quantity of care rather than quality of care. We spend hundreds of billions of dollars every year on unnecessary tests and procedures that do not improve a patient's health. We need to change the incentive system. We need doctors and hospitals to work together to coordinate care, putting the patients' needs first.

In my district of southern Minnesota, the Mayo Clinic has created such a culture where doctors coordinate and look for the best quality results. There are other institutions around the country who also provide high-quality, efficient care at low costs. These organizations all do it differently, but the one thing they have in common is a culture of patient-centered care.

This culture needs to be replicated in every hospital across the country, and the way we get there is by changing the incentive system. I'm very proud that the provisions in this bill will address this very issue. If we're to reform any part of health care this year, this is the key.

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#### PROGRESSIVE BUT NOT PARTISAN?

(Mr. COBLE asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. COBLE. Mr. Speaker, much has been spoken and written about the White House snub of Fox News. We have heard little, however, about MSNBC. Anita Dunn, the departing White House Communications Director, was quoted in a recent New York Times article claiming that Rachel Maddow and Keith Olbermann, MSNBC hosts, are "progressive but not partisan." Well, they surely fooled me.

Some may agree with Ms. Dunn by concluding that these two are not merely partisan, but rather fiercely partisan, and Ms. Dunn insults our intelligence by claiming otherwise.